

REMARKS

In the Office Action the Examiner noted that claims 1-31 are pending in the application, and the Examiner rejected all claims. By this Amendment, claim 31 has been amended. No new matter is presented. Thus, claims 1-31 remain pending in the application. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below, and reconsideration of all rejected claims is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC §102

In item 3 on pages 2-4 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-15, and 17-31 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,509,995 B1, issued to Suzuki et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Suzuki") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,805,199, issued to Aoki (hereinafter referred to as "Aoki"). The Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections of these claims.

Claim 1 of the present application recites "wherein the multi-beam semiconductor laser is installed such that an imaginary line drawn through light emitting points of the laser is inclined with respect to the main scanning direction." The Applicant respectfully submits that neither Suzuki nor Aoki disclose at least this feature of claim 1.

The Examiner stated that Suzuki discloses a multi-beam semiconductor laser "installed such that an imaginary line drawn through light emitting points of the laser is inclined with respect to the main scanning direction (see Figs. 2A and 2B)." However, the Applicant respectfully submits that it is apparent that the light source 1 in Figure 2A is not installed so that an imaginary line drawn through the light emitting points is inclined with respect to the main scanning direction. Suzuki discloses that the light source 1 may be a single-beam type or a multi-beam type (Column 8, Lines 41-43). Assuming that the light source 1 is a multi-beam type, an imaginary line drawn through the light emitting points would be perpendicular to the main scanning direction in Figure 2A, and not inclined to the main scanning direction.

The Examiner has apparently equated the perpendicular line drawn through the light emitting points of the light source 1 as being inclined with respect to the main scanning direction. However, the Applicant respectfully submits that one skilled in the art would not reasonably consider a perpendicular line as an inclined line. The word inclined is defined as "deviating in direction from the horizontal or vertical; sloping." The Random House Dictionary of the English Language 967 (2nd ed. 1987). This same source also defines an inclined plane as "forming with

a horizontal plane any angle but a right angle." As the main scanning direction in Figure 2A is in the horizontal direction, and a line drawn through the light emitting points of the light source 1 is perpendicular to that line, i.e., at a right angle to the main scanning direction, the line drawn through the light emitting points is not inclined to the main scanning direction. This is in direct contrast to claim 1 of the present application, which recites "wherein the multi-beam semiconductor laser is installed such that an imaginary line drawn through light emitting points of the laser is inclined with respect to the main scanning direction."

Further, this deficiency of Suzukin in regard to claim 1 of the present application is not cured by Aoki, which the Examiner has relied upon for disclosing a slit between lenses. For a proper §103 rejection, the combined references must disclose all of the features of the rejected claim. Therefore, as neither of the cited references, either taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a laser scanning apparatus "wherein the multi-beam semiconductor laser is installed such that an imaginary line drawn through light emitting points of the laser is inclined with respect to the main scanning direction," it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

Claims 2-3, 5-15, and 17-26 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of that claim plus additional features which are not taught or suggested by the cited references. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-3, 5-15, and 17-26 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Claim 27 of the present application recites "installing the multi-beam semiconductor laser inclined with respect to the main scanning direction." As discussed in regard to claim 1 of the present application, the cited references do not disclose or suggest at least this feature of claim 27. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 27 also patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

Claims 28 and 29 of the present application each recite "wherein the multi-beam semiconductor laser is installed with an imaginary line drawn through light emitting points of the laser inclined with respect to the main scanning direction." As discussed in regard to claim 1 of the present application, the cited references do not disclose or suggest at least this feature of claims 28 and 29. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 28 and 29 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Claim 30 of the present application recites "wherein the multi-beam semiconductor laser is inclined with respect to the main scanning direction." As discussed in regard to claim 1 of the present application, the cited references do not disclose or suggest at least this feature of claim

30. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 30 also patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

Claim 31 of the present application, as amended, recites "wherein the multi-beam semiconductor laser is provided such that an imaginary line passing through light emitting points of the laser is inclined with respect to a main scanning direction." As discussed in regard to claim 1 of the present application, the cited references do not disclose or suggest at least this feature of claim 31. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 31 also patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

In item 3 on page 5 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 4 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Suzuki in view Aoki, stating that it would have been obvious to make the first and second lenses to be reversed from each other. The Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections of these claims.

As discussed above, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited references. As claims 4 and 16 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of that claim plus additional features which are not taught or suggested by the cited references, it is respectfully submitted that claims 4 and 16 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Summary

In accordance with the foregoing, claim 31 has been amended. No new matter has been presented. Thus, claims 1-31 remain pending and under consideration.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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